nate, more set in his opinion, exaggerating his crustiness, and always scratching the same spot in his brain where the itching becomes more and more localized. He says: "Ah, those who work from nature! What impudent humbugs! The landscapists! When I meet one of them in the countryside, I want to fire away at him. Bang! Bang!" (He raises his cane, closes an eye, and aims at the drawing-room furniture.) 'There ought to be a police force for that purpose." Etc., etc. And again: "Art criticism! What an absurdity! I am accustomed to saying" (and in fact I remember hearing him say exactly the same things three or four years ago) "that the Muses never talk among themselves; each one works in her domain; and when they aren't working, they dance." And twice more he repeats: "When they aren't working, they dance." And again:

The day when people began to write *Intelligence* with a capital I, all was damn well lost. There is no such thing as Intelligence; one has intelligence of this or that. One must have intelligence only for what one is doing."

9 My

At La Roque; I dismiss Robidet and, after an hour's conversation, succeed in making him sign a formal renunciation of the house, of which, in a moment of great stupidity, I had given him undisputed use. Most probably Robidet's misappropriations were even more serious than I had even been able to imagine, to judge from his collapse when I began to accuse him. He, usually so wordy, did not even try to defend himself. I was well aware that my great advantage when facing him was that he believes me to be *good.* All the time that I was talking to him I had much more disgust than pity for him; how had I been able to put up with him so long?

I find it hard to imagine his return home, the evening

spent with his "housekeeper" and his daughter. . . . What did he say? What did he tell them? Did they get angry that he signed so easily? . . . Oh, how weak the imagination feels before what reality must have beenl . . . Yet that was the best chapter of the novel * . .

11 July

Georges does not like *La Porte etrotte;* he prefers my other books to it; and he is free to do so; but he begins to be wrong when he reproaches this one for not having the qualities that made up the charm of some of the others; I try to make him understand that the important thing, the hard thing> was precisely not putting in here those qualities which were not the ones suited to this novel.

Tn everything excellence is as difficult as it is rare," (Last words of Spinoza's *Ethics.)*